

Meeting Notes for the April 23, 2008 Indiana Disproportionality Committee Public Policy Subcommittee (PPS)
Chair Mark Bryson

Member in attendance: Mark Bryson; CL Day; James Garrett, Jr.; Clara Anderson;

Discussion was informal and related to PPS subcommittee members' interaction and observations with Indiana Commission on Disproportionality in Youth Services (ICDYS).

James Garrett, a member of the ICDYS Education subcommittee, posited his thoughts regarding next steps after the committee work is completed. Concerns were raised regarding accountability mechanisms for follow through of the recommendations that will be made. Additionally, he shared thoughts regarding his preferred method of strategy formulation. It was his thinking that the Education subcommittee should first develop a model final product and then build a strategy to achieve the desired results rather than developing a strategy and then working toward a less specific final product.

There was a consensus regarding the degree that cultural competency would be a part of the ICDYS's work. Proposed HB 1107 requiring Indiana schools to have cultural competency strategies in place did not pass. Clara Anderson suggested and members of the PPSC agreed that the ICDYS should actively seek support from key stakeholders and legislators to move cultural competency legislation forward in the future, as well as broadening the scope beyond education towards the other affective areas that included the four systems (child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health). Clara also noted that there was potential for a ground swell of legislative support in favor of the cultural competency bill if the legislators and commission members could be sufficiently apprised of the benefits of cultural competency training in the various systems that might include public forums.

Further discussion was held regarding the degree that statistical data could demonstrate the disparities that racial and ethnic youth are encountering as well as the societal cost associated with this particular problem. Social costs that include crime to person and property, costs of incarceration coupled with the loss of potential future tax paying citizens are but a few examples of how disproportionality affects the general personal and economic welfare of the larger community.

It appears that systems that track data regarding suspensions and expulsions in public educational systems as well as incarcerating and referral systems in juvenile justice and child welfare may not be not sufficient. Our group was in consensus that effective data impact and or comparative analysis would do much in making the case for reduction of unwarranted overrepresentation in the four systems by numerically demonstrating the disproportionality concerns to drive the argument for system reform and policy changes.

Additionally, we discussed how the IDCYS might reduce or shift the costs of data collection and research by considering partnerships that might serve to underwrite or

partner in sharing the financial burden associated with the data gathering with other interested organizations. Examples of possible resource partners could be the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Indianapolis Black Chamber of Commerce, or other organizations that recognize the other costs associated with disproportionate impact factors.